

7 June 1982

Developments in Chad

The forces of insurgent leader Habre occupied the capital of Chad this morning at 0500 EDT after a brief battle with government troops. According to conflicting reports, President Goukouni has fled to Cameroon or towards northern Chad, was killed, or has been taken prisoner. All known US diplomatic personnel and their dependents have been safely evacuated to the northern Cameroon border town of Kousseri. OAU forces in N'Djamena have stayed aloof from the fighting. As of 2:30 PM EDT, Radio Chad had not carried any radio broadcast by Habre or his representative. The radio may be out of commission, or more likely Habre's forces are still mopping up. There has been no public response to Habre's takeover from Tripoli thus far. [REDACTED]

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Habre's takeover serves US interests in Chad at least for the short term. He is at present the nearest equivalent among Chad's competing factional leaders to a moderate, pro-Western leader. He also is an ardent nationalist who is wary of Libya. In our view, he can be expected to avoid an accommodation with Libya that would somehow give Qadhafi a new entry into the Chad in the more distant future. Habre, an effective and honest administrator, sees political reconciliation as the only avenue leading to the possible reestablishment of political stability in Chad and reducing the potential for future foreign intervention. Chad's moderate African neighbors--Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Central African Republic--as well as Sudan and Egypt clearly regard Habre as a more moderate, stronger, and potentially more effective leader than Goukouni. [REDACTED]

25X1

Habre, however, essentially is an opportunist and over the long run may be a less reliable friend of the West than we would like. During the more than ten years he has fought other factional leaders for control of Chad, he has repeatedly betrayed and changed his alliances, creating about him an aura of distrust. For now, he needs the sympathy and support of moderate Africans, France, and the US to help him establish authority. Habre also has a reputation for hostility toward central Chad's large Arabized population. [REDACTED]

25X1

To survive beyond his military victory, Habre needs to translate his battlefield success into building a stable, broad-based political base. This will put a premium on his ability to overcome his reputation for duplicity and to effect political reconciliation with the non-Muslim south and with various northern Muslim factional leaders previously

SECRET [REDACTED]

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allied with Goukouni. Because of his superior force of arms at the moment, some factions will opportunistically rally to Habre's side, but he clearly faces a struggle to forge new alliances. The south, for example, is split into two groups, one favoring reconciliation under former Vice President Kamougue and the other opposing this. Thus far, former Foreign Minister Acyl--representing central Chad's Arabized population, has not opposed Habre's takeover in the capital but he has not extended the olive branch. [REDACTED]

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Chad's deeply fragmented and factionalized political scene will continue to afford ample opportunities for Libyan meddling behind the scenes in order to keep the pot boiling. Qadhafi, during his upcoming tenure as OAU chairman, can be expected to try to extend money and moral support if not some arms to favored factional leaders to try to make it difficult for Habre to consolidate his position through political reconciliation. [REDACTED]

25X1

In a worst case scenario, it is possible that Goukouni--if he survives and escapes--or a stand-in could mount anti-Habre guerrilla operations in northern Chad from the Libyan-occupied Azouou strip over the next year of Qadhafi's OAU chairmanship. Qadhafi could maintain publicly that he does not support such activities, and after the OAU tenure, turn to Chad in earnest once again. [REDACTED]

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